GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1154
ANSWERED ON:24.07.2017
Classical Status of South Indian Languages
Antony Shri Anto

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is contemplating about stripping off the classical status accorded to various South Indian languages including that of Malayalam;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government has received any representation in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the response of the Government thereto; and

(e) whether the Hon'ble High Court of Chennai has recently issued any directive on the aforesaid matter and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (IC) FOR CULTURE & TOURISM

(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a): No, Madam.

(b): Question does not arise.

(c),(d)&(e): In the recent years, no such representation has been received in the Ministry. However, earlier Shri R. Gandhi, Advocate, Chennai at different times had filed five Writ Petitions in the Hon'ble High Court of Judicature at Madras. Details of the same are given as under :-

(i) Writ Petition No. 18810 of 2008 seeking reconstitution of the Committee of Linguistic Experts.

(ii) Writ Petition No. 28334 of 2008 challenging the notification of Telugu and Kannada as classical languages.

(iii) Writ Petition No. 27405/2014 seeking strict adherence to the criteria laid down for classification of a language as classical one.

(iv) Writ Petition No. 5813 of 2015 and Writ Petition No. 5814 of 2015 challenging the notification of Malayalam and Odia as classical languages respectively.

Hon'ble High Court of Judicature at Madras heard all the five Writ Petitions together in number of sittings/hearings. Finally Hon'ble High Court vide its order/judgment dated 8.8.2016 disposed of all these writ petitions and also ordered that all concerned miscellaneous petitions are closed.

In its detailed judgment, the Hon'ble High Court has inter-alia stated that it is for the experts to verify whether the languages satisfy the norms and recommend for the declaration. Having satisfied, they have recommended for the declaration of the languages in consideration to be 'classical'. The facts which made the expert body to recommend the promulgation of such declaration has also been placed before us and a copy has also been furnished to the petitioner. As such we do not find any reason to interfere with the impugned declaration. This Court cannot convert itself into a forum for debate on such matters. If the Petitioner still feels that the particulars furnished by the respective states would not satisfy the criteria, it is open to him to approach the authorities. Similarly he can also give his suggestions for determination of the type of literature, that can be benchmark for qualification for consideration to the concerned authorities.

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